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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8912
INFO RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY 0509
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY 2635
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY 3192
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY 3609
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA PRIORITY 0124
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 0242
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY 0623
RUEHC/DEPT OF LABOR WASHDC PRIORITY
RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAHL/DEPT OF HOMELAND SECURITY WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 002392

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STATE PASS TO USTR SAUMS, ROSENBERG, KARESH
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DHS FOR U.S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/05/2017
TAGS: [ELAB](#) [ETRD](#) [GTIP](#) [KTEX](#) [BG](#) [JO](#)
SUBJECT: LABOR MINISTRY CALLS LATEST NLC REPORT "OLD NEWS";
PREPARING UPDATE ON ACTION PLAN

REF: AMMAN 2211

Classified By: AMBASSADOR DAVID HALE FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

1. (SBU) Summary: On June 1, the New York-based National Labor Committee (NLC) released a third report on labor violations at five factories in Jordan. Jordan's Ministry of Labor (MOL) responded in a press release that MOL welcomed the NLC's efforts to help identify labor violations, but had reservations on the latest report which seemed to contain inaccurate and outdated information. MOL continues to investigate any allegations of labor violations that it receives, and expects to issue shortly the results of its investigations in response to the NLC's March 2007 report, as well as an update on progress on the MOL's action plan released in March 2007 (to be reported septel). End Summary.

2. (SBU) Minister of Labor Bassem Salem told the Ambassador June 5 that although grateful for the NLC's support in exposing labor violations and improving workforce conditions, the MOL was already addressing many of the latest allegations in the June 1 NLC report, which Salem called "old news." A similar message was publicly conveyed in a June 5 press release by the Ministry, which also highlighted that the MOL has moved away from reacting to problems after they occur, to proactively preempting violations before they happen. The Minister also indicated that he plans to publicly report in coming days on improvements made in Jordan's inspections regime, although there are still gaps that need to be filled.

3. (C) USAID-funded Advisor to the Minister of Labor, Lejo Sibbel, told Econoff June 5 that the MOL plans to investigate the allegations in the June 1 NLC report, as it has been doing in response to any allegations received. At first glance, however, he said that at least 50 percent of the information is inaccurate and confirmed that the data is outdated. For example, much of the information provided on the "Concord" factory was already in the NLC's March 2007 report. Additionally, the report states that four workers from the "Central Clothing" factory were imprisoned based on false charges of protesting the death of a co-worker, but MOL's initial investigations have revealed that two workers were actually arrested based on complaints that they stole samples. Ten employees from the "Fashion Curve" factory were

also reportedly jailed on false charges, but MOL has so far confirmed that only one out of the ten has been in jail since May 14 based on complaints from fellow workers that he beat them.

¶4. (C) According to MOL Advisor Sibbel, one problem with the NLC's reporting is that it is often based on one subjective source, whose facts are not always checked. He added, however, that the MOL has been developing a relationship with the NLC, which now provides the Ministry with its reports directly, perhaps making it easier in the future to stress to the NLC the importance of any reports containing verified information.

¶5. (C) Further to Ref A, Sibbel noted that conditions have improved dramatically at the "Classic Fashions" factory since an employee died on May 8 after working a 22-hour shift. Apparently, Classic's Managing Director confided to Sibbel that he did not realize what was actually going on in his factory before the worker's death occurred. The Director claims that he has since ensured that the length of overtime worked in the factory is within regulations, conducted town hall meetings with workers, and put a stop to any abuse by supervisors.
Hale